

Horse Memories

I admire people that keep and care for horses. There is no half way of having a horse. It is a way of life to own a horse. I have had a few when I was a kid and we lived in a place called Bass, Arkansas. My grandfather owned a place called the National Wildlife Club in north central Arkansas. My parents managed a sixty room lodge with a swimming pool, a one hundred plus bed bunkhouse with conference center, café, and cabins. It was the Bass Pro Cedar Lodge of its day!

There was dirt strip airway on top of one of the ridges that people would fly from all over the country to hunt goat and boar. This is where the horses came in. The hunters would go on horseback to hunt these animals and I would sometimes be asked to get in the picture with them and their trophies. My horse was named Cactus and she looked to be seventeen hands back in the day, but she was probably only thirteen to fifteen hands. She was a sorrel mare with a white star on her head and four white stockings on each leg. I loved that horse! We would collect wild strawberries, poke sallet, and sassafras root to make tea. So, as you can imagine my life into the outdoors started early and it revolved around horses.

I feel bad now because when I take my daughter to ride horses or mules she will say that she wants one. My wife loves horses because she too had one in her youth and barrel raced some with her pony. I enjoy rodeos and being around them. I met a couple of folks that own a horse camp. Rickie and Lora Hosman own and operate Posey Hollow Horsecamp near Mena, Arkansas. They offer camping, trail riding, family wagon rides, and fishing! Now that's right up our alley. That is the extent to our love of horses right now. We are just fortunate to have people like Rickie and Lora and their love for horses to be able to offer folks like us an opportunity to still be around that lifestyle of horses.

The National Wildlife Club was a great place to be as a young boy. There was one horse if you put the wrong saddle on him he would take you out and buck you off. It was a far piece to walk back too. To test that theory we would save that experience for a select few people that weren't very polite. It proved to be true on several occasions. People say that Arkansas doesn't have mountain lions, but in the late sixties and early seventies our horses got out and went into the mountains around the Buffalo River. We had some old Ford Broncos and went out to find them. One horse had been attacked from the rear with large claw marks. It was evident that a large cat had ambushed the horse. Nobody kept mountain lions back in those days and released them into the wild. I'll leave it up to your imagination to wonder. I have heard one cat in the Blackwell Bottoms near Morrilton while hunting. I don't care if it was wild or released, that experience reminded me that I never want to be stalked by one. I miss Cactus. She was a special friend that took me all over the mountains around the Buffalo River and enlightened my love

for the outdoors. Remember that it's never too late to make memories with children that will last a lifetime.

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